The Bishop of *NORWICH*'s

SERMON

Preach'd before the

House of LORDS,

On *January* the 9th, 1739.

Die Lunæ 14° *Januarii*, 1739.

ORdered by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in Parliament assembled, That the Thanks of this House be, and are hereby given to the Lord Bishop of *Norwich*, for the Sermon by him preach'd before this House on *Wednesday* last in the Abby Church of *Westminster*; and he is hereby desired to cause the same to be printed and published.

Wm. COWPER,
Cler. Parliamentor.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

House of LORDS,

IN THE

Abby-Church of *Westminster*,

On *Wednesday*, *January* 9th, 1739.

Being the Day appointed by His Majesty for a General Fast and Humiliation before Almighty God, for obtaining Pardon of our Sins, and imploring the Divine Blessing and Assistance on the Arms of His Majesty, and for restoring and perpetuating Peace, Safety, and Prosperity to Himself and to His Kingdoms.

By *THOMAS* GOOCH, Lord Bishop of *Norwich*.
translated to Ely 1748.

LONDON:

Printed for J. PEMBERTON, at the *Golden Buck* against St. *Dunstan*'s Church in *Fleetstreet*. 1739.

2 Chron. xx. 15.

Hearken ye all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid, nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the Battle is not yours, but God's.

IN this Chapter we have an Account of a great Army of *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, and several others in Confederacy with them, on the March against *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*. On this Occasion the pious Prince, *potent as he was*,* proclaims a Fast, and assembles his People, *to ask Help of the Lord his God.* In the midst of the Congregation stood the King himself, and in a short, but excellent Prayer, adores the Majesty of Heaven; acknowledges the supreme Dominion of the Almighty over all Nations, and sets forth the cruel and unreasonable Attempt of their Enemies: — Enemies, not only uninjur'd and unprovok'd, but

 even

* 2 Chron. xvii. 13, &c.

even under Obligations to them: and therefore he and his Subjects express their Dependance on the supreme Being, in a War so unjustly forced upon them. Thus acted this pious Prince, and thus religiously join'd his People with him, in their Addresses to the great Arbiter and Disposer of all things.

That these devout Petitions were heard, this solemn Humiliation accepted, by the Almighty; we may certainly infer from the Words I have pitch'd upon for the Subject of my present Discourse: for being so assembled together, came *the Spirit of the Lord* on *Jahaziel*, who thus prophetically animated both King and People: —*Hearken ye all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid, nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but* God's.

In like manner, by the Authority of our gracious Sovereign, are the People of this Kingdom now assembled; to humble ourselves by Fasting and Prayer, and devoutly to petition Heaven for Assistance, in a *War* both unavoidably and unjustly brought upon us. But should I, or any one else, after the Example of *Jahaziel*, advise you *neither to be afraid, nor dismayed*; and in consequence of such Advice, to lay aside your Preparations for War, because the *Battle is not yours, but* God's: this

this might well be deem'd enthusiastick Rant, rather than sober Counsel. Many were the Wars, while God thought fit to adopt a People, as peculiarly his own; when he was pleas'd to interpose by Miracle, or direct by Prophecy; when neither could the Reasons of such Wars be warranted, nor the Success insur'd, but by his Divine Authority. In this Sense therefore no one can say, who means to justify what he says, that *the Battle or War is* God's.

But though there be Reasons so peculiar to their State and Circumstances, that the Wars of the *Jews*, are not Precedents for other Nations; yet some Particulars there are, in which we may, without Rashness, imitate their Conduct; and, without Presumption, hope for the same Success. If we may not invade other People, to dislodge them of their Habitations, to abridge them of their Properties, or deprive them of their Liberties; yet may we defend our own, and repel Force by Force; when they are attacked or threatned: If we are not allowed, by Dint of Arms, to conquer other Kingdoms; either to introduce the true Religion, or extirpate a false one; yet may we, and ought we, with our utmost Might, to prevent the Introduction of the one, and to preserve the Establishment of the other, among ourselves. In such Instances as these; the Proposition will evermore be

true, in a ſober Senſe; and evermore allowed, while we continue to allow a God and a Providence preſiding over human Affairs; that *the Battle or War is God's.* And this is what I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate, and then apply to the preſent ſolemn Occaſion.

In general, all Events are God's; by Appointment ſometimes; by Permiſſion always. As natural Cauſes were deſtined by their great Creator to the Production of their proper Ends; ſo in the Production of moral Purpoſes, are moral Agents the Inſtruments of his Providence: And thus particularly is *War* by God himſelf declared to be *one of his ſore judgments*; * and a ſorer there cannot be, than when he commands — *Sword go through the land.* †

But the Caſe under preſent Conſideration is, we truſt, of another Nature: And it is to be enquired with what Propriety, a *War* between two or more Sovereign Princes, or independent Nations may be ſaid *to be God's.*

When *Jehoſhaphat*, in the preceding Chapter, had *ſet judges over the land* to determine Controverſies about private Property; he tells them, that *the judgment was not theirs, but God's.* ‖ God's; as

* Ezek. xiv. 21. † Ibid xiv. 17. ‖ 2 Chron. xix. 6.

as it was his Appointment, and by his Authority. God's; as it answered the divine Will and Purpose in Support of Right and Justice, and to secure the Peace and Order of the World.

In like Manner, the Prophet, in the Text, by the Spirit of the Lord declares, that *the Battle is God's*. For the Almighty having appointed no Vicegerent authoritatively to determine national Interests and Claims, reserves this to himself, as his own Prerogative. It is one of those high and important Things; which as our Saviour expresses it, *the Father has put in his own power*; and therefore to Him, as to the supreme Judge and Governor of the World, is the *Appeal in War*.

Agreeably to these two Passages in the sacred Story, and to the Reason of our present Meeting; give me leave to shew, that the securing or recovering the Rights of different Nations, interfering with each other, stands upon the very same Foundation, with the Preservation or Recovery of private Rights, between Members of the same Community: That both are defensible and equally so; that both arise from the self same Principles; and are both alike *the Voice and Will of God*.

Whatever then were the Motives, arising from the Equality of our common Natures; the Relation

tion we bear to each other; the Sameness of Inclinations and Affections; the Sense of our mutual Wants, and the Necessity for mutual Assistance; all of them strongly inciting, and even compelling to Social Life: the same will induce the Obligation on different Nations and Countries to hold fair and friendly, just and honest Intercourse and Commerce with one another. Let us consider ourselves as of one, or of many Nations, in Language Strangers, in Situation distant; still we have all the same Proportion in one common Nature, and the same Pretension to one common Interest; and therefore the Rule *of doing, as we wou'd be done by*, does not rest on the Declaration of Scripture, but on the Equity of the Rule itself; and is as much a Maxim of true Honour, as of true Religion; as much a National, as a Social Duty. And accordingly the great Apostle applies this Argument; not to the Case of private Communities, but to the great Community of the World. *God*, says he, *has made of one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth; and hath determin'd the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.** Thus spake St. *Paul* from the Book of Nature, when he was disputing, not with *Jews* and *Christians*, but with *Epicureans* and *Stoicks*. Here he lays down, as a most certain *Postulatum*, the universal Relation, which, however situated, all Nations

* Acts xvii. 26.

tions and People bear to God, and to one another: And from hence arises that mutual Obligation, that different, independent Countries are under, to promote each others Good, to prevent each others Injury, as being naturally related by Blood and common Parentage.

The Trial is full as easy, and the Issue as certain in independent Countries, as in individual Persons. The Smart we feel by an accidental Wound does naturally mind us of the Feeling of our Fellow-Creatures, and their Sentiments, on the same Occasion. The Sense which every Nation has of injurious Treatment (and keen enough it generally is) cannot fail to excite a proper Sense of that Resentment, which another Nation must express when so mal-treated.

All this is in Specularion true, and justly founded: but the Peace, and Harmony, and Union resulting from it are contrary to Experience. Were Mens Passions and Appetites as regularly conducted, as they were duly fram'd, they would be as sure a Preservative of Society, as they were originally design'd to lead us to it: But this not being the Case, coercive Power, and Appeal to Superiors, are introduced in Aid of reasonable, and in Suppression of irregular Conduct: And so fundamental an Article is this, in every private Community; so necessary

for

for the well-being of Mankind; that Government has been always deemed of divine Appointment; and we have the Spirit of God himſelf to warrant us in ſaying, that *the powers, that be, are ordained of God.* *

And ſince, as We have obſerved, the very ſame Obligation lies on Nations and Kingdoms, as they are naturally related to one another; we can eaſily trace the Obligation and Duty; but the Redreſs may be ſtill to ſeek for. What then is to be done; when Nations, independent and without any viſible, common Superior, ſhall break through theſe ſacred Fences, invade each others Rights, and act with lawleſs and boundleſs Ravage?

And here I found the *Right of War*, as the *only* poſſible Redreſs; here the *Right* of appealing to God, as the *only* common Superior; and here the Right (if I may ſo expreſs it) of our Application to him by Prayer for Succeſs in War. And with this agree thoſe frequent Aſſertions in the ſacred Writings, that aſcribe Succeſs and Victory on one ſide, or Defeat and Overthrow on the other, to God's over-ruling Power.

And on this Account; whereas War is generally defined, to be the State of thoſe, who diſpute by Arms; I would rather define it to be an Appeal to Heaven

* Rom. xiii. 1.

Heaven by the Use of Arms. For it is not to be imagined, that the great and righteous Governor of the World, who provides so well for the Peace and Welfare of private Communities, by pointing out the Method of Civil Government; should leave the great Community of the World, so much more his proper Inspection and Care, to blind Accidents and Chance. 'Tis evident, that no Authority but his can interpose, to restrain and curb the Insolent, or to shelter and protect the Innocent: *This* from his Almighty Power we conclude him able; *this* from his abundant Wisdom, Goodness and Justice, we conclude him willing to do. To think otherwise is to suppose, that the great Creator of the World has form'd some of his Creatures strong and powerful on Purpose for Oppression; and others weak and feeble merely for Submission: That the mighty Tyrants of the Earth were designed, by one common Father, to lord it over the rest of his Children: Or that one aspiring Monarch should rival the Supremacy of the God of Heaven, by attempting universal Monarchy, reversing at the same time that most amiable Character, of being *good and gracious unto All.* Far be this from the greatest and best of Beings! *The Judge of all the earth will certainly do right*: * Right to every Individual here, or hereafter: To States and Kingdoms here, as hereafter not subsisting.

* Gen. xviii. 25.

If then the Almighty, the *God of Order*, and Fountain of Power, has given the *Sword* into his Vicegerent's Hands, to preſerve his Subjects quiet at Home; to guard them from Injuries Abroad: If in one, as well as t'other, he is not *to bear the Sword in vain*;* it remains to be enquir'd, when it may juſtly be unſheath'd in War, and how far we may, without Preſumption, depend on the Almighty for Aſſiſtance in it. The former Enquiry will, in a great meaſure, anſwer the latter: for ſince, as has been obſerv'd, the engaging in War is appealing to God, the great Arbiter and Decider in all ſuch Cauſes; great Need is there of the utmoſt Caution, that all the previous Steps we take, all the Reaſons we aſſign, and all the Iſſue we propoſe, be ſuch as will approve themſelves to a Being of infinite Knowledge, and unerring Juſtice. In Suits at Law, we appeal to Judges, who tho' they are not, and cannot be ſuppos'd infallible, are ſuppos'd diſpaſſionate and impartial: but then we ſhall be thought to tranſgreſs the Bounds of Charity and Equity, unleſs we can anſwer for ourſelves, that we have endeavour'd a fair and friendly Accommodation; that the Matter, we contend about, is ſeriouſly ſuch as deſerves it; that we can by no other Means come at our Right; that we are reaſonable and eaſy in our Demands; that our Temper is not ſower'd by the Proſecution; and that we are

* Rom. xiii. 4.

are willing and desirous to come to an End. Thus qualified we may go on unblameably, without any sinful Revenge, and without injuring even the Injurer himself. In like manner 'tis with National Quarrels: when we have taken the same previous Steps, we may proceed both honourably and justly; knowing that Falshood and Fraud can no more impose on an Omniscient, than Strength and Might prevail against an Omnipotent Judge.

And must it not be allow'd, that all these Circumstances concur, that some of them appear to Advantage, in the present War? His Majesty justly asserts in his Declaration, his being obliged *to make use of the Power which God has given him:* His People with one Voice join in the same Declaration with him. Both of them, by the most glaring Proofs, convinc'd of Insults and Indignities, of Depredations and Cruelties, that our Countrymen have met with; such as must raise the Resentment of a Nation, as much distinguish'd by their Courage in War, as by their Skill in Trade. Had there been nothing but bare Interruption in Navigation and Commerce, without any other Hostilities or Barbarities committed; yet such Interruption *only* would be wounding us in the most tender, vital Part. The Circulation of Trade is, to such a Kingdom as this, just of the same Importance as the Circulation of Blood to a Body na-

tural. An Attempt upon it, is as an Arrow at the very Heart. And what an Aggravation is it, that all this Uſage comes from a Nation, (I may be pardon'd, if I ſay) too much oblig'd: and (perhaps I may need no Pardon, if I further ſay) from a Nation born with, till Matters were paſt bearing?

Senſible of theſe Indignities to Himſelf, of theſe Injuries to his Subjects, but ſenſible withal of the great Expences and Inconveniences of War, long did His Majeſty apply for, in a friendly Way, Satisfaction for Wrongs and Inſults paſt, and ſure Stipulation for future Security. This ſeem'd indeed to produce *Conviction:* for this at laſt was terminated in a *Convention*; of *which* I will ſay no more, and I think I can ſay no leſs;—that how ineffectual, or inſufficient ſoever, it might be deem'd in *Britain*, it ought to have been the more ſacred and inviolable in *Spain*; and therefore with the Infraction of former Treaties, an obſtinate Defeat of *this* muſt ſwell the large Account of *Breach of Faith*, with which our Sovereign charges the *Spaniſh Crown*. And moſt certain it is, that by all the Rules of Equity, by all the Law of Nations, there is no one Circumſtance that more defends and demands a Recourſe to Arms, than a perfidious evading, or renouncing ſolemn Stipulation of Agreement.

With

With these Views then, and with these Provocations justly and necessarily does this Nation engage in War; and unless after our Impatience for it, we grow impatient under it, we have no Reason *to be dismayed*, no Reason *to despair*; but by the Blessing of God, on whom our Sovereign relies, we shall bring it to an happy and an honourable Conclusion. What good Grounds we have to hope for such Blessing and Assistance, it may be proper now to enquire. And beside the Justness of our Cause, which best entitles us to the Favour of an upright Judge, we may expect from the Nature and Circumstances of Things, with due Submission to God's over-ruling Providence, a happy Issue in the present Trial. A Man, who in Civil Society breaks through the publick Laws for private Gain, saps the very Foundation, on which all his Interest, and even his honest Acquisitions, stand. Should such a wicked Scheme generally prevail, every Possession must be rendered precarious and uncertain: But while the Notions of Right and Wrong subsist, every Man's Hand and Voice must be against the Invader of the Laws, and Disturber of the Tranquillity of his Country. Even so with regard to national Rights; however a Kingdom thinking themselves too powerful to be controlled, or depending on strong Associates in Oppression, may propose to reap some present Profit: They must be abandoned

abandoned by all considerate People, as Violaters of the Law of Nations, and Defiers of the Justice of Heaven.

In what Manner it may please the Almighty to work out Victory and Deliverance for us, we must not presume to say, without Jahaziel's *prophetick Spirit*. When the People of *Judah*, on *his* Encouragement, *began to sing and to praise*, † *the Lord set Ambushments against their Enemies*. What those Ambushments were, 'tis hard to say: But from the Sequel of the Story it appears, that thereby they were greatly disconcerted among themselves, and fell foul at last upon one another. And while we trust in God, in whose Hands are the *Hearts* and *Lives* of Princes, and at whose Command is the whole Frame of Nature; who knows the Methods of his infinite Wisdom, in baffling the Designs of our Enemies? Whether *by shewing his wonders in the deep*; by dividing and confounding their Counsels; by disappointing them of those Aids and Alliances they vainly hoped for; by various Nations discovering in Time their proper Interests; or *chiefly* by our Adversaries finding themselves deceived in their Notions of the Power, and Policy, and Unanimity, even of those, whom they wantonly defied. These are *Ambushments* and Snares, which *have* probably been set, and which *will* probably prevail.

But

† Verse 22.

But whatever be the previous Methods of Providential Disappointment; when Matters are brought to the utmost Rupture, and are determinable only by the Sword; in any Encounters with our present Enemy, by the Blessing of God, we have no sort of Reason to be *dismayed*. Even when they thought and called themselves Invincible, *they fell back and perish'd*: and so often has *British* Bravery prevail'd against them since, that to have been ourselves the Assailers and Aggressors, would rather have been an Instance of our Cowardice than our Courage.

As to their Dependence on auxiliary Forces; I would not pretend to be Politician enough to enter into the Cabinets of Princes, and judge of their Views and Refinements, on the present Posture of Affairs. But surely, if we look into the Confederacy, which our Enemies or ourselves had our Eyes upon a twelve-month since, we shall hardly think it either so favourable on one Side, or so formidable on t'other, as we then apprehended. Perhaps we may be less *dismayed*, by that very Nation which seem'd most to *dismay* us. A Nation, aspiring to Greatness, rivalling us in Trade; allied to our Enemies by Blood; and with them strictly join'd, in that worst and fiercest of all Aversions —A Religious Aversion to our present Establishment in Church and State.

Even

Even from hence, *ſhould there riſe up War againſt us, yet will not our Hearts be afraid*; ſince, beſide that *Britiſh* Reſolution will always diſplay itſelf, in proportion to the Strength of the Adverſary, and the Importance of the Attempt: we truſt, that the Juſtice of our Cauſe, the Wiſdom of our Counſels, the Character of our Sovereign, and the Value of our Friendſhip, will procure us more than a Balance for all ſuch Aids.

Let us but be *at Peace with God, and with one another*, and then we may bid Defiance to all the World. And this brings me to the laſt Obſervation I ſhall make from the Text and Hiſtory before us; and to which, if I have not been already too great a Treſpaſſer, I would beg your ſerious Attention.

Hear me, O Judah, ſays the pious King; *Believe in the Lord, ſo ſhall ye be eſtabliſh'd: Believe his Prophets, ſo ſhall ye proſper.* Your Fleets and Armies, however increas'd, diſpos'd or conducted; however animated with Courage, or fired with Reſentment againſt a cruel and perfidious Nation, are not to be your only, or your laſt Reſort; *the Battle ſtill is God's*; the Appeal is made to him, and he alone muſt *make us Conquerors.* This is the Reaſon of the ſolemn Application we make this Day at *the Throne of Grace.* If any one ſhall preſume, that while we have the juſter Cauſe, or ſuperior Sterngth,

Strength, we may be sure of a happy Decision on our Side: 'Tis granted, that these are proper Requisites; and so far 'tis reasoning right. In inferior Judicatures the juster Cause should always carry it. In Cases of *meum and tuum* moral Character is out of the Question.

But with Regard to Nations and Kingdoms the Case is otherwise. Here the Reasons of the Determination may be to us inscrutable, and the *Victrix* and the *victa Causa* may surprize and puzzle us. The Almighty sits as absolute Ruler, as well as Judge: The Sword may be drawn for *Vengeance*, as well as *Decision*: And a War, like a Plague or Pestilence, may come on a Land *for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.* Thus it far'd with God's own People, and thus will it fare with other Nations. At his Tribunal we are sure of Justice; but Moral and Religious Character only can secure his Favour. Even in our earthly Judicatures, there is such a Case as *Outlawry*; and the criminal Conduct of a Subject, may cut him off from all the Protection of the Laws of his Country. And how *deep soever* are the *Judgments of God*, in the Dereliction of his Providence, and the consequent Overthrow of States and Kingdoms; we may in general pronounce, and confirm it by History and Experience; that Nations which stood impregnable as Rocks, while wise and virtuous, and cemented by Union,

have ſunk by their Sins and Follies; and (if I may ſo expreſs it) have degenerated into Deſtruction.

How far our Adverſaries, or ourſelves, have made this our Caſe, muſt be ſubmitted to his Deciſion, to whom we have appeal'd. Known unto him are the moſt diſtant, as well as the moſt hidden Springs of Action: but if we may be allowed to take a View of the Riſe and Progreſs of the preſent Contention, we ſhall find it, on our Enemies Side, founded on a Title, which itſelf is founded in innocent Blood—the Blood of Millions, maſſacred for no other Crime, but being poſſeſs'd of valuable Mines. How far this Blood is unatton'd for, we leave to him, who *maketh Inquiſition for Blood*. In the mean while, how *much* Ambition and Avarice ſtill continue to have the Aſcendant over the *Spaniſh* Court, lies open to the Eyes of the whole World. *Hence*, their extravagant Claim to abſolute Sovereignty in the *American* Seas: a Point never to be yielded, while there are among us any Remains of *Britiſh Honour*, any Regard to *Britiſh Intereſt*. *Hence*, their Views of multiplying Kingdoms: a Point, that merits the Attention, and will probably alarm the Powers, as it certainly affects the Balance, of *Europe*. *Hence* that ſolemn Piece of Mockery lately practis'd, in the Proſtitution of ſacred Character, and a Papal Diſpenſation for it: And this may they ev'n enjoy, to the Honour

nour of the *Catholick Crown*, and the Credit of the *Infallible Chair*.

But 'tis time to have done; and therefore instead of *minding* their Faults, let us *mend* our own. Would to God *they* were fewer. Of *them*, whatever they be, let us heartily repent, and endeavour to reconcile ourselves to our God and Judge. If our *War be God's*, let us take God's and his Religion's Part: If we appeal to him, let us make him our Friend. And since the greatest, under God, of all other Securities, is an Union of Hearts and Affection among ourselves; let us lay aside that Party-Rage and Fury, that divide and weaken and expose us. While we see People united in behalf of their Governors abroad, under whom they live in the most abject Slavery and Depression of Body and Mind; who might probably be better'd, hardly can be made worse, by changing Hands; shall Liberty and Luxury make us so wanton, that while, of all the Nations upon Earth, we have the greatest Obligation to be both easy and satisfied, we are remarkable for the greatest Inclination to change?

Let then a true Religion inspire us with a becoming, as a false one does the Enemy with a blind and furious Zeal: and while the bigoted Prince, with whom we have to do, vainly imagines, he shall merit Heaven, by placing a Popish Pretender

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on the Throne of these Kingdoms; Let this very Consideration unite us the more firmly, in Duty and Loyalty to our most gracious Sovereign; in the strictest Adherence to the Succession in his Royal Family; and a sincere Attachment to the Constitution in Church and State: So shall that God, to whom we have made our Appeal, and to whom we are this Day making our Addresses, continue to be *our Saviour and mighty Deliverer:* So shall *the Lord give strength unto his people*; so shall *the Lord*, in his own good Time, *give to his people the blessing of peace.*

F I N I S.